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Business Notices.

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some accident caused by carelessness in enjoying this sport. Yesterday's record is particularly bad. At Newark, N. J., one boy was killed and eight others were injured in the course of the day. At Waynesboro, Penn., a sled loaded with thirteen men went flying down a hill at a furious rate of speed, owing to a false move on the part of the man who was steering. It was turned sharply aside and upset. Four riders were injured, probably fatally, and all the rest were hurt. A woman who was so unfortunate as to be in the neighborhood had her leg broken. A few more accidents like these, and the popularity of coasting will wane, at Newark and Waynesboro, at least.

The Special Assembly Committee has now held sessions enough to show the manner and temper in which its investigations are to be conducted. They are unequivocally good. The questions are searching, and quibbling is not put up with; at the same time no disposition is manifested to twist replies to mean something which they do not. The County Clerk's and the Sheriff's office have thus far received most attention, and it is clear enough that they need it. Neither Mr. Keenan nor Mr. Davidson has appeared to advantage. They have been prompted frequently in their replies by their subordinates, thus showing how little they know personally about the duties of their respective offices. Yet these officials are paid for performing their work from \$40,000 to \$80,000 a year. They would hardly need prompting if questioned about the duties of local politicians, we presume. In a word, the committee has already discovered abuses enough in our municipal management to justify the Legislature in doing some pretty sharp work.

PLANS TO SAVE NATIONAL BANKING.
The present danger to the banking system is that those who wish to save it do not agree as to the mode. There are too many plans. Several are excellent, but only one can be adopted. If those who desire to keep the national banking system alive insist upon half a dozen different plans, and vote against any except the one each thinks the best, the enemies of the system will prevail.

A bond of the United States is now ample security for notes up to its par value. The short-term bonds can hardly fall below par because the Government is redeeming them. The long-term bonds command a high premium, and would be bought in by any honest and rational Administration if they should fall near par, in preference to redemption of bonds payable at the option of the Government. If the bond is ample security for its par value, what reason is there for demanding a deposit of more than the value of notes issued? At the outset when public credit was frail and exposed to the chances of war, and specie redemption seemed impossible, there was good reason. That time has long passed. The bond deposited now yields less than 3 per cent interest, instead of over 6 per cent when the banking system was established. To exact more security than is ample is to make the abandonment of the system more probable.

Senator McPherson's bill, which the Finance Committee of the Senate has reported favorably, is not just what most friends of the National system would have preferred. It allows the issue of circulation to the par value of any bonds deposited, provided the amount shall not exceed the capital stock paid in. This is an exceedingly simple remedy; the question is, not whether it is the best possible, but whether it is sufficient and safe. If the bonds are in all cases a sufficient security for their par value, is there danger on the one hand that the circulation may be unduly expanded, or on the other hand that the remedy may not suffice to prevent surrender of circulation?

The fact that the circulation was fairly maintained as long as 3 per cent bonds were plenty, though bonds were required to deposit \$100,000 bonds in order to issue \$90,000 circulation, strongly indicates that the banking system would not be generally abandoned if 3 per cent, or other bonds yielding nearly the same rate, could be used as security for their par value. It will be some years, at any rate, before the 3 per cent can be cleared away, and it may be expected that another Congress will be not more unfriendly than the present, so that a further remedy can be applied if found necessary. On the other hand, there can be no great expansion of the system without such a demand for 4 and 4½ per cent that the high premium upon them will induce sales. Banks going out of the circulation business, on this account, will then be apt to balance in the main those that may go in, and take bonds at higher figures than now rule.

It is not the question whether this plan is the best conceivable. It has the support of some influential Democrats in the Senate, and of party friends outside the House. A bill which no influential Democrats in the Senate support is very apt not to become law. If this remedy can be applied, while one that we consider better cannot be, it is not wise to do the best thing practicable to preserve the banking system?

THE UNBALANCED BID CONTRACTS.

The explanation given to the Senate Committee yesterday, of the extraordinary unbalanced bid contracts in the Public Works Department, did not differ materially from previous statements. Commissioner Thompson testified that the bids were "remarkable" and the contracts "unfortunate." But he thought the "enormous error" was merely the result of mistakes or perhaps carelessness on the part of the surveyors. How the contractors were able to secure a knowledge of the real state of the ground in each case, so as to profit by the alleged errors in his department, was more than even Mr. Thompson could explain. His principal surveyor, Mr. W. V. Smith, was willing to acknowledge that he had made some very bad "errors in judgment," although he was paid for his services a good sum yearly out of the city treasury—how much he could not tell.

It is to be hoped that the Legislature will take some action to save the city from further losses because of these alleged "errors in judgment." The transcripts from the Department records presented to the committee show equal need of legislative action. It appears that although Mr. Thompson's appropriations have been largely increased each year, he has still further regularly added to some of them by means of the outrageous practice of transferring alleged unexpended balances. In the second year of his administration, Mr. Thompson paid out \$193,207 more for the hire of day laborers than in the previous year. But each laborer has a vote. And that will explain a great many things in the Public Works Department.

AN EXTRAORDINARY EFFUSION.

On another page of this impression we reproduce from advance sheets of the Memoir of Thurlow Weed by his grandson, Thurlow Weed Barnes, a remarkable letter. Though unsigned, Mr. Barnes gives it as the letter of Judah P. Benjamin, found among the papers of Thurlow Weed. But for his assurance that the proofs of its authenticity are conclusive, we should certainly hesitate to believe that it could have come

from the seceding Louisiana Senator, of whose fame as a great lawyer the country has since been proud. Written in August, 1860, to the British Consul in this city, it was inspired by a realization of the fact that the result of the campaign then in progress was likely to be the election of Mr. Lincoln to the Presidency. A large and varied assortment of treasonable sentiments were being spoken or written at that time. Every leading free-trader was in a state of eruption. But in this letter Mr. Benjamin achieves a bad eminence among his erring brethren. The scheme suggested to the British Consul—elegantly addressed as a "gentle stranger"—is not by any means the boldest or most defiant of the overtures made by rebels in those days. But the general verdict is sure to be that it was the most despicable, the most un-American.

A few months after this putting himself on record, Mr. Benjamin rose in his place in the United States Senate and took ostentatious, not to say spectacular, leave of that body and of the Union. He referred to his passionate love of freedom as justification for his departure. He had been reminded by legal associates that the right of secession once admitted the Federal Government became "a mere rope of sand." In his valedictory he met this point by grandiloquently exclaiming: "Better, far better, a rope of sand, say, the dimmest gossamer that ever glistered in the morning dew, than chains of iron and shackles of steel; better the wildest anarchy with the hope, the chance, of one hour's inspiration of the glorious breath of freedom, than ages of hopeless bondage and oppression to which our enemies would reduce us." Place this exclamation of February, 1861, alongside of the letter of August, 1860, and it is discovered to be the shabbiest sort of bamboozle—a solid chunk of hypocrisy that would have been the despair of Pecksniff. The henpecked husband, known to story, who had been ordered under the table, remarked to his Xantippe from that retreat, "While I have the spirit of a man I will retreat." His analogue appears in the person of this Louisiana hero, who, having announced that his neck and the necks of the people of his section were rather more than willing to be compressed by the yoke of Great Britain, hastens to add that while he has the spirit of a man he will cease not, day nor night, to shout the battle cry of freedom.

We do not think the Southern people behaved very well during the era in which the "gentle stranger" received this cringing epistle. We have intimated as much—once or twice—and only recur to the subject at this time to express the belief that Mr. Benjamin did not represent any considerable number of the men and women of his section in the suggestion he threw out. The Southern leaders may have been with him, but we have too good an opinion of the Southern masses to suppose that he had their sympathy in proposing to turn Dixie into a British colony.

The letter is a valuable contribution to the literature of the war period. It only needs one thing to make it perfect of its kind, and that is an abject apology for the Declaration of Independence.

PUBLIC SPIRIT.

If the dead observe the proceedings of their survivors, and if we retain in the next world the temperaments which belonged to us in this, how astonished the spirit of Julius Hallgarten must have been by the memorial service held in honor of the mortal Hallgarten last Thursday afternoon. We can almost imagine the clear and gentle eyes expanding with wonder, and the face flushing with embarrassment (if ghostly faces flush), as the modest gentleman looked in at Steinway Hall, and saw a multitude collecting in the driving storm to celebrate his good deeds, and the great Philharmonic Society over which he once presided paying to his memory the rare tribute of a musical mourning. It was one of the most charming characteristics of Julius Hallgarten that he seemed to be unconscious of his own merit. Nothing delighted him more than to contribute to an object of charity or of public benefit, or to any wise scheme for the advancement of culture; and nothing distressed him more than to have his generosity advertised. Some of his benefactions are just now coming to light. We have already mentioned his liberal contribution to the fund for rescuing poor children from the New-York streets, and his insistence upon secrecy in the matter. It appears that he was the prime mover in a subscription for carrying out an old plan of Theodore Thomas's, to give free concerts to the working classes, and that shortly before his death he privately forwarded to Dr. Adler \$1,000 to be used for this purpose. He was the founder of a prize-fund in connection with the National Academy of Design, and there is probably no reason why the fact should not now be disclosed that he initiated the foundation of a musical prize-fund also. We know of other projects of an artistic character to which he gave liberal assistance, contriving, however, that his name should be kept back. He was a man of remarkable kindness; his will shows that; but perhaps the most notable thing about him was the union of great public spirit with a singular and engaging modesty.

The clarity which does good by stealth and blushes to find it fame has been a common type of virtue for eighteen hundred years. The combination of public spirit with extreme simplicity of character is more rare. Public spirit, as distinguished from charity, is nearly allied to the sentiment of pride rather than of compassion. It was a favorite civic virtue of the ancient Roman State in which the feeling of pity for others' misfortunes was almost unknown. It was vain and self-conscious. The purely unselfish ambition to advance the prosperity, distinction, comfort, elegance, education, and refinement of the community, without any thought of personal advantage or of posthumous honor, is wholly a product of our modern civilization. We have had some signal examples of it in America. We had one in the unassuming career of Peter Cooper. We should find hundreds of cases in point if we knew the full history of private benefactions to American colleges, amounting, according to a recent calculation, to over seventy-five millions of dollars. There are men in New-York who have given away fortunes, who are still giving, and will give as long as God spares them, but of whose benefactions to the community probably no full record can ever be made.

Julius Hallgarten was a man of this stamp; and it is in view of this stamp that a great deal of the hope of our country lies. We are too fierce in the scramble for wealth; we set too high a value upon material success; we pay an exaggerated respect to money; but there is a saving nobility in the character of a people among whom the virtue of public spirit appears in such illustrious purity.

AN ENGLISH VIEW OF MORMONISM.

Mr. James W. Barclay, M. P., has what he correctly calls "A New View of Mormonism," in *The Nineteenth Century* for the current month. It is a new view, but its novelty is principally due to ignorance of facts and misrepresentation. Mr. Barclay went among the Mormons, and

they "foiled him to the top of his bent." They represented themselves as a peaceful, inoffensive, loyal, patriotic people, who only desired to lead quiet and well-regulated lives, and who, barring the trifling eccentricity called polygamy, were distinguished from the rest of the American people solely by their superior virtues and industry. The picture drawn of them by this credulous and simple member of Parliament is truly Arcadian, while their history is so transparently under his hand that one wonders how so pure and good and harmless a people should ever have incurred the dislike of their neighbors. Mr. Barclay was evidently careful to abstain from seeking information outside of the Mormon fold, for he ingeniously observes that "it is not easy to discover the grounds of the hostility—I might say antipathy—toward the 'Mormons' manifested by Americans in the 'Eastern States'; and then he glances casually at possible origin of this feeling thus: "Stories are related of attacks by the Mormons on 'emigrant trains to California in the early 'days, and of deeds of bloodshed, but such 'stories have not, so far as I am aware, been 'fully authenticated.'"

When a traveller undertakes to instruct his countrymen, and especially when he undertakes to present a "new view" of a subject on which the general mind has long since been made up, he ought at least to know something about his theme. But Mr. Barclay does not know anything about it except what the Mormons have told him, and it is plain that they have not told him the interesting history of the Mountain Meadows massacre, nor of the trial, conviction and execution of John D. Lee and Porter Rockwell for their participation in that terrible crime; nor of the many murders and assassinations perpetrated by the Danites in the early history of the Utah settlement; nor of the immorality which caused the Mormons to be driven out of Illinois and Missouri. But the color of the whole article is Mormon, as may be seen by the absurd statement that "the people of the 'United States are indebted to Brigham Young and the Mormons for the assistance they rendered in constructing the railway and telegraph lines over a very difficult portion of the 'route.' The truth is that Brigham Young and the Mormons simply took contracts to do grading over some of the very easiest parts of the road, and made money out of it. The work would of course have been done all the same if they had not been there.

Another piece of wild and preposterous nonsense gravely advanced by Mr. Barclay is the expression of a belief that "the animosity to Mormonism is principally 'due to the efforts of the host of 'hungry office-seekers who would find lucrative posts in Utah were the Mormons disfranchised, and by the missionaries from the 'Eastern States who come to turn the Mormons 'from the error of their ways, and whose 'come depends on the strength of the feelings 'they can excite in their supporters.' As Mr. Squiers remarked on a celebrated occasion, "Here's richness!" We doubt whether anything quite equal to Mr. Barclay's "new view" has appeared since Julius Janin undertook to write his famous criticism upon "Nicholas Nickleby" from the peculiarly advantageous point of view of absolute ignorance of the English language. Mr. Barclay's suppositions office-seekers and Eastern missionaries certainly justify the title of his article, but we are inclined to think that he did not get this information from the Mormons. It is so essentially exotic that we suspect him of having evolved the idea from his own inner consciousness. Next in originality to this brilliant conception is Mr. Barclay's suggestion that polygamy may have originated from "the drafting of 500 men to form the Mexican battalion from the small community at Council Bluffs." But the entire article abounds with gems of this kind. In fact they are so thick that we should think even the wicked Mormons who "stuffed" the British legislator must experience remorse when they see how trustfully he has accepted their most colossal fictions.

MR. NEWTON'S CHOICE OF METHODS.

The Rev. Mr. Newton's sermons and lectures on the Bible continue to excite controversy and discussion. In his own communion he is condemned by those who believe that the great religious need of the age is positive preaching, and that the chief drawback to the progress of Christianity is a negative and elastic theology. A prominent clergyman, preaching a week ago in Brooklyn, did not hesitate to pronounce Mr. Newton insane, and intimated that this was the deliberate judgment of those who knew the man and had studied the Biblical criticism of the day. Undoubtedly there are many clergymen in and out of that religious body who believe that the Christian cause would be materially strengthened if this outspoken critic were tried for heresy and deposed from the ministry. On the other hand Mr. Newton finds apologists among the Broad Churchmen, who without identifying themselves too closely with his theological views are jealous of the liberty they themselves enjoy of believing and preaching Christian truth, not necessarily as it has come down to them from the Fathers of the Church, but as it is reasoned out, explained and rendered more intelligible by the art of modern criticism.

This diversity of views respecting Mr. Newton's theology does not stand in the way of a general agreement in regard to his method of opening and conducting the discussion. That method is condemned alike by Christian ministers and laymen. Dr. Ryle, expressed it forcibly in a talk with a *TRIBUNE* reporter quoted in yesterday's issue. "The pulpit," he said, "is not the place from which to launch 'these questions, the audience being without the training and the data to appreciate as 'whole the discussion and the field of higher criticism.' Mr. Newton's argument would naturally have been addressed to an audience familiar with the principles and canons of Biblical criticism. Instead of advertising a course of sermons on the errors of the Bible, he might have written a book for the patient study and the deliberate judgment of theologians. When it became clear that his logic was unanswerable and that his conclusions were a help rather than a hindrance to an enlightened faith, it would have been time to open the subject for popular discussion.

What is the criticism upon Mr. Newton's utterances offered by clergymen of liberal views, who in many respects are in sympathy with him? It is briefly this: that he has accepted hypotheses which have been proposed by ingenious scholars, but have not been proved; that in eliminating what he considers mythical elements and legendary traditions, he has assumed the validity and genuineness of myths and legends the historical value of which has not yet been ascertained; and that in indiscriminately mingling fact and theory he has exceeded the positive knowledge of the most erudite Biblical criticism of the day. We believe these strictures upon Mr. Newton's teachings to be well-founded. In addressing a critical audience capable of discriminating between what was true and what was only hypothetical or problematic, he would have acted with discretion. In exploiting his Biblical

studies as a pulpit sensation he has done mischief.

SULLIVAN—AND A SUGGESTION.

Gentlemen who find much of taking low views of human nature will do much to encourage them in the account of the reception which San Francisco accorded to John L. Sullivan. If instead of being a professional braggart and proprietor of a flashy "sample-room" he had been a great military hero, a popular author, a distinguished statesman, he could scarcely have excited more attention—such as it was. It is estimated that 6,000 of his "admirers" gave him welcome on his arrival. The fact that the metropolis of the golden state contains so many people of that sort makes it as much an object of genuine sympathy as Boston itself. It certainly is not a fact calculated to turn toward San Francisco the eyes of emigrants who have not learned how to put up their fists. Mr. Sullivan would seem to have been intoxicated by the enthusiastic greeting which he inspired. Perhaps, on second thought, that was not the name of the liquor. At all events, he did not appear to good advantage. It is reported that "the sparring was a disappointment." This statement warrants the suspicion that he failed to kill any of the local pugilists.

P. S.—The *New-York Times*, which is constantly boasting by implication that its largest circulation is among the worst people that can be counted upon to take offence at the above, it may justly claim that *THE TRIBUNE*, in standing for the peace and good order of society against Sullivan and his kind, is representing "the best people" at whom *The Times* loves to sneer, rather than the worst people, to whom it prefers to cater. We admit the force of the reasoning, and suggest to our disturbed neighbor that it can get even with *THE TRIBUNE* and "the best people" by coming out with a double-headed article defending Sullivan's aims and achievements, and demonstrating that the sparring at San Francisco was not a disappointment, but at once a delight and an inspiration.

The principal effect of the discovery of murders on Long Island seems to be to incite other murders. The temptation to assail isolated farmers and their wives in that region appears quite irresistible to the undeveloped criminals there, and if there are many more similar crimes we shall begin to apprehend a general massacre of the farmers. In fact, the farm-house assaults to murder are rapidly becoming epidemic.

One of the saddest of the tales of hunger and suffering which have appeared lately is that entitled "A Patagonian Cannibal in Want," now going the rounds of the newspapers. That once happy savage should be reduced to a free country, starving with missionaries and honey, to a state of starvation is indeed distressing. He looked across the broad and populous continent, like the shipwrecked mariner on the boundless ocean, and was forced to exclaim: "People, people everywhere and not a man to eat."

"Let us know," says *The World*, "if the people still rule and have the power to select their own government." Precisely. That is the object of Senator Sherman's resolution of inquiry into the Southern outrages. We are glad to find our Democratic contemporary so ready to join *THE TRIBUNE* and the Republican party in exposing anti-republican methods at the South.